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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4092
INFO RUEHWW/SOUTH ATLANTIC SITREP COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RULPALJ/USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN
RUCBSAA/USCINCLANT NORVA
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC/JSI-4A/JSI-4B/DB-3B/DB-3E/DC-4A
BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 3536

CINCSO FOR INTAFF, CINCLANT FOR POLAD, ROME FOR VATICAN

EO 12065: GDS 6/11/88 (KEANE, JF) OR-P
TAGS: PBOR, UK, AR, FA
SUBJECT: SOUTH ATLANTIC CRISIS: SITREP AS OF 1300 PM, JUNE 11, 1982

1. (C) SUMMARY: POPE'S VISIT HAS DISPLACED MOST OTHER
SUBJECTS FROM THE DAILIES. ALTHOUGH HIS PRESENCE WILL
ENGENDER THE LARGEST POPULAR RESPONSE IN HISTORY, THINKING
PEOPLE, INCLUDING THOSE IN GOVERNMENT, AWAIT HIM WITH HOPE
AND TREPIDATION. THEY WANT JOHN PAUL II TO HELP THEM FIND
A WAY OUT OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC CONFLICT, BUT THEY FEAR HE
MAY TRY TO PRESSURE THEM INTO ACCEPTING WHAT THEY CONSIDER

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State Dept. review completed

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A HUMILIATING PEACE. THE ENCOURAGING (TO ARGENTINES) NEWS OF MAJOR UK LOSSES EARLIER THIS WEEK IS STILL REVERBERATING. THIS ADDS TO A GROWING SENSATION THAT ARGENTINA HAS PROVEN ITS METTLE, THAT THE NATION IS DIFFERENT FROM WHAT IT WAS BEFORE THE FALKLANDS INVASION AND, TO SOME, THAT IT IS ENTERING AN ERA OF NATIONAL GREATNESS SO LONG FRUSTRATED. ON THE MORE PROSAIC LEVEL, YESTERDAY'S CEREMONY FOR "MALVINAS DAY" WAS MARRED BY ANTI-BRITISH AND ANTI-AMERICAN DEMONSTRATIONS. END SUMMARY.

POPE'S VISIT

2. (U) POPE JOHN PAUL IS TREATED TO A MASSIVE MEDIA BLITZ; B.A. DAILY "CLARIN," FOR EXAMPLE, DEDICATES ITS FIRST 10 PAGES EXCLUSIVELY TO THE VISIT. A MILLION PEOPLE ARE EXPECTED TODAY AT THE SHRINE OF THE VIRGIN OF LUJAN OUTSIDE BUENOS AIRES AND AT LEAST TWICE THAT NUMBER TOMORROW AT PALERMO WITHIN A STONE'S THROW OF THIS MISSION (TO USE AN UNPLEASANT METAPHOR).

3. (U) THE INITIAL CRITICISM, QUESTIONING AND RESENTMENT THAT HIS VISIT PROMPTED FROM A FEW COMMENTATORS HAS NOW VIRTUALLY DISAPPEARED FROM THE MEDIA AND BEEN REPLACED BY EXUBERANT EXPRESSIONS OF PRAISE. A NUMBER OF OBSERVERS HIGHLIGHT THE "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" THAT ARGENTINA HAS WITH THIS POPE BASED ON HIS DEVOTION TO CAUSES WHICH ARE CLOSE TO THE CONCERNS OF MANY PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY: HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND JUSTICE FOR WORKERS (LABOREM EXERCENS) HAD GREAT IMPACT HERE AND HIS QUEST FOR PEACE IN THE BEAGLE DISPUTE. HIS VISIT HERE AND NOW IS CIRCUMSTANCIAL, BUT MOST COMMENTATORS AGREE THAT IT IS NOT THEREFORE ANY LESS IMPORTANT. ONE OBSERVER WRITES, "HIS FIGURE ALONE WILL BE REASON TO HOPE FOR PEACE." "CLARIN" SAYS IN ITS EDITORIAL TODAY: "THE POPE WILL SPEAK OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN A COMMUNITY THAT HAS VIOLATED THEM TOO OFTEN. ...THE POPE WILL SPEAK OF SOCIAL SOLIDARITY IN A COUNTRY THAT HAS SUNK INTO AN ECONOMY OF SPECULATION AND APPEARS TO HAVE CONDEMNED ITS LEAST-FAVORED CLASSES TO UNDERNOURISHMENT, UNEMPLOYMENT AND IGNORANCE."

4. (C) ANOTHER THREAD WEAVING THROUGHOUT MOST OF WHAT IS WRITTEN AND SAID, HOWEVER, REVEALS THAT MANY ARGENTINES

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ARE CONCERNED THAT THE POPE'S MESSAGE OF PEACE WILL BE A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD. IGLESIAS ROUCO OF "LA PRENSA": "IN DIVERSE SECTORS, INCLUDING THE GOVERNMENT, THERE IS A MIXTURE OF HOPE AND FEAR REGARDING THE INFLUENCE THAT JOHN PAUL II MAY EXERCISE IN BUENOS AIRES, EITHER AS A MAKER OF A PEACE WHICH IS JUST SHORT OF UNCONDITIONAL-- SOME REFER TO IT AS SURRENDER--OR AS A KIND OF MEDIATOR IN OUR CONFLICT WITH GREAT BRITAIN, WHICH WILL PRODUCE AN HONORABLE SOLUTION." IN OTHER WORDS, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE CONCERN THAT THE POPE WILL CALL FOR STEPS -- IN A VAGUE BUT UNMISTAKABLE WAY--THAT THE GOA WOULD CONSIDER HUMILIATING.

5. (C) ALREADY PREPARED FOR THIS CONTINGENCY, THE THEME COINED FOR HIS VISIT LOCALLY IS "PEACE WITH JUSTICE". THE REFRAIN APPEARS EVERYWHERE AND BY "JUSTICE" WHAT IS MEANT IS "THE MAINTENANCE IN ARGENTINE HANDS OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS", AS A WIDELY-QUOTED STUDENT PUT IT.

THE WAR

6. (U) BRITISH ADMISSION OF HEAVY CASUALTIES EARLIER THIS WEEK ARE PLAYED UP, AS ARE REPORTS OF CONTINUING ARTILLERY BATTLES, SMALL UNIT SKIRMISHES AND AIR STRIKES ON UK POSITIONS. THE SUCCESSFUL AIR STRIKES OF TUESDAY NIGHT, THE DELAY OF THE BRITISH ASSAULT (WHICH IS IN PART ATTRIBUTED TO VALIANT AND EFFECTIVE ARGENTINE COUNTERATTACKS AND DEFENSIVE MEASURES) AND CLAIMS OF "DEVASTATING" LOSSES ON THE UK SIDE SEEM TO HAVE COMBINED TO BOOST MORALE, PRIDE AND SELF-CONFIDENCE.

7. (C) THESE APPARENT SUCCESSES AND THE ENTIRE FALKLANDS EPISODE HAVE LED MANY COMMENTATORS TO DWELL ON THE

EVER-POPULAR THEME OF ARGENTINA'S "GREAT DESTINY". THE WAR, THEY CONTEND, HAS OPENED A NEW ERA IN ARGENTINA. FOR MOST, AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THIS ERA IS A RETURN TO INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE. ARGENTINES AT ALL LEVELS SHARE FRUSTRATION AT ARGENTINA'S DESCENT INTO RELATIVE OBLIVION OVER THE LAST FIVE DECADES AND THEY SEE IN CURRENT EVENTS A TURN OF THE TIDE.

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8. (U) AS ONE OBSERVER PUT IT: "WE HAVE TAKEN ON THE THIRD LARGEST MILITARY POWER IN THE WORLD, BACKED BY THE FIRST (US) AND WE ARE HOLDING OUR OWN. WE MAY ULTIMATELY BE DEFEATED BUT AT GREAT COST TO THE BRITISH AND THE UNITED STATES. WE HAVE PROVEN THAT ARGENTINA IS A NATION TO BE RECKONED WITH." AIR FORCE BRIGADIER JOSE MIRET TOLD THE PRESS YESTERDAY, "NO ONE WILL CONFUSE RIO DE JANEIRO WITH BUENOS AIRES IN THE FUTURE (A CONSTANT HUMILIATION OF ARGENTINES IS THAT AMERICANS AND EUROPEANS ARE IGNORANT OF SOUTH AMERICAN GEOGRAPHY). EVERYONE WILL KNOW WHO WE ARE AND THE COURAGE OF ARGENTINA." SOME DAYS AGO, POPULAR TV COMMENTATOR MARIANO GRONDONA AVERRED, "THE INSIGNIFICANT ARGENTINA OF PRIOR TO APRIL 2 (THE DATE OF THE INVASION) IS A THING OF THE PAST. ARGENTINA IS NOW A MAJOR ATLANTIC POWER AND AN IMPORTANT COUNTRY, ON THE FRONT PAGES OF EVERY NEWSPAPER IN THE WORLD. I DO NOT WANT TO RETURN TO THE SMALLNESS OF BEFORE EVER AGAIN." EVEN THE NORMALLY CAUTIONS AIR FORCE CINC, LAMI DOZO, SAID TO THE PRESS LAST WEEK THAT "MANY PEOPLE TOLD ME BEFORE WE REGAINED THE FALKLANDS THAT WHAT OUR NATION NEEDED (TO TURN THE COUNTRY AROUND) WAS A WAR. I HOPE THOSE THAT SAID THAT ARE NOW MAKING THEIR CONTRIBUTION."

FALKLAND ISLANDS DAY

9. (U) SEVERAL THOUSAND PEOPLE TURNED OUT TO CELEBRATE THE "DAY OF AFFIRMATION OF ARGENTINE RIGHTS OVER THE FALKLANDS." SOME MEMBERS OF THE CROWD CHANTED ANTI-AMERICAN AND ANTI-BRITISH SLOGANS

THERE IS NO VIOLENCE.

10. (U) EMBASSY WILL BE CLOSED SATURDAY DUE TO POPE'S OUTDOOR MASS TWO BLOCKS AWAY. THE NEXT SITREP WILL BE FORWARDED ON SUNDAY, JUNE 13. SHLAUDEMAN

END OF MESSAGE

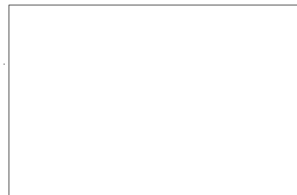
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MEMORANDUM FOR:

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Fallclerds traffic -- not much!

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Date 11 June 82